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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE

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SUBJECT: LISBON-MADRID JOINT COUNTRY TEAM

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¶1. This is a joint message from Embassies Lisbon and Madrid.

¶2. SUMMARY: On March 25, the Country Teams of Embassies Lisbon and Madrid met to discuss law enforcement issues, counter-terrorism, common multilateral challenges, military cooperation strategy, and cost savings measures, as well as commercial and public diplomacy practices. The meeting established areas where we can work together and share best practices already being used successfully in the neighboring country. In particular, participants used the opportunity to identify immigration patterns and to discuss the impact on counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics efforts worldwide. Embassy Madrid also offered an overview on radicalization trends in Spain, which have not yet affected Portugal but could potentially become a problem in coming years. Ambassadors Aguirre and Stephenson praised the event and suggested a second joint meeting in two to three years. END SUMMARY.

¶3. As part of our continuing efforts to put in place "best practices" in Embassy management, Embassies Madrid and Lisbon initiated a joint Country Team to coordinate Mission Strategic Plans, share tactics and learn each other's approaches to mutual challenges. We offer an outline of the program and a summary of the resulting initiatives and/or action items to spark similar programs at other Missions. As a result of the day of intensive coordination between the two missions, we expect to realize significant cost-savings and enhanced effectiveness in our operations.

¶4. The agenda was based on MSP mission statements. Embassy Lisbon's country team traveled to Madrid for an all day session courtesy of Ambassador Stephenson's offer of air transportation for his staff. Madrid is one hour ahead of Lisbon, so sessions ran from 1000 to 1830, including thematic breakout sessions during working lunches. Topics included regional security coordination, Amcit outreach, multi-lateral issue coordination, energy, planning for the new Barcelona Law Enforcement Hub, counter-narcotics and drug interdiction, counter-terrorism, U.S. product export in the Iberian market, military training coordination, public diplomacy initiatives, energy conservation, and cost-saving measures.

¶5. Section chiefs from each country team served as "lead discussants" to frame issues for each agenda item and facilitate discussion, then tracked action items formulated during the joint sessions. Some of the initiatives under consideration include:

SECURITY:

-- Joint Emergency Action Plan Exercise is tentatively scheduled for June 2008;

-- RSOs will notify counterparts when convening an EAC and share EAC meeting results with counterparts;

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

-- More frequent visits by DEA & ICE to supplement ongoing ORA & LEGATT visits, along with additional coordination to ensure potential value added is exploited and overlapping activities avoided;

-- Another "Operation All Inclusive" to promote international cooperation among law enforcement agencies working on counter-narcotics issues as a follow-up to the 2007 operation;

-- ICE Madrid proposed expansion of its current pilot "Bulk Cash" detection program to detect unreported cash courier operations departing Madrid en route to the United States via Portuguese airports;

-- Embassy Lisbon to participate in Embassy Madrid's weekly Law Enforcement and Counter-Terrorism Working Group meetings via DVC;

OUTREACH:

-- Explore whether there are opportunities for collaboration on volunteer projects linked to public diplomacy and citizen outreach, e.g. Lisbon's Habitat for Humanity volunteer project;

-- Coordinate with agencies with regional responsibilities, e.g. ICE, DEA, on press outreach to schedule backgrounders and interviews with Lisbon press;

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-- Cross train in public diplomacy and send Lisbon's Cultural specialist to Madrid for consultations with Madrid's Cultural Attaché;

-- Consider diplomatic exchange program for Embassy Madrid to have diplomats work in the Foreign Ministry (already operational in Lisbon through the Bilateral Commission);

DEFENSE:

-- Coordinate military training components (internal USG, bilateral and multilateral), particularly for interdiction activities and AFRICOM;

COST-SAVING AND EFFICIENCY:

-- Explore bulk pricing and combined orders for Embassy purchases, e.g. compact fluorescent light bulbs for Green Embassy initiative;

-- If residential furniture leasing program is approved by Department and Madrid's pilot program achieves expected cost savings, consider extending contract to Embassy Lisbon, an unfurnished post;

-- League of Green Embassies: both posts to continue to share energy efficiency and recycling strategies;

-- Request EUR support to encourage OBO funding for "green" initiatives that require upfront investment for long-term savings;

ENERGY:

-- Explore addition of a Madrid stop in the Fall 2008 Renewable Energy Trade Mission under development by USCS

Portugal, as well as tie-in with Madrid AmCham September 29-30 energy event;

COMMERCIAL:

-- Work with select U.S. Export Assistance Centers to organize a multi-city U.S. visit for the Senior Commercial Officers to promote Iberian market opportunities to U.S. exporters (Winter 2008);

-- Coordinate preparation of Iberian market research reports with focus on Energy, ICT, Medical Equipment, Pollution Control Equipment and Travel/Tourism Infrastructure;

-- Joint advocacy for biotech initiatives in the EU since Spain and Portugal are two of only seven EU countries that allow biotech products;

-- Explore joint participation in the February 2009 Mobil World Congress Exhibition in Barcelona and EuroSun 2008 in Lisbon;

CONSULAR:

-- Resume joint consular conference initiative and possibly initiate consular exchange program in 2009;

-- Extend Madrid program to enter names of sexual predators and pedophiles into consular CLASS listings;

-- Continue use of U.S. state victim's programs to assist Amcits in the Iberian Peninsula (may include funding for Amcits to travel and testify at trials);

¶6. Given staff rotation through our missions, our intent is to repeat the process every two or three years if possible. Apart from the specific initiatives resulting from the joint country team, the opportunity to forge working relationships with counterparts was invaluable and is expected to have intangible benefits as well. We welcome suggestions from the Department and other posts regarding how to implement the proposals or enhance the program in the future.

Stephenson